

Terrestrial Animal Health Standards
Commission Report: March 2006

GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION
AND TRACEABILITY

PRELIMINARY DOCUMENT

System for identification and traceability of live animals – main points

The purpose of these guidelines for animal identification and traceability is to provide an instrument for OIE Member Countries to improve animal health and public health as well as to ensure better management of health crises at national and international levels.

Animal traceability requires an efficient animal identification system in order to ensure a continuum in the food production chain.

Several steps need to be taken before implementation can commence.

This system can be used to assist in meeting other objectives such as: quality assurance programmes, certified products, organic farming, ownership.

The development and implementation of the system should be done in consultation with representatives of the applicable animal and industry sectors.

The scope of these guidelines is to present the main points that constitute a system for identification and traceability of live animals as well as the outcomes required.

Strategy

1. Preliminary studies

- a. **Assess the current situation, including farming structure.** The Veterinary Administration, in collaboration with stakeholders, should assess the requirements and scope of the animal identification system and animal traceability. The current situation should be evaluated. To this end, an assessment should be carried out taking in consideration factors such as:
 - Animal populations, species
 - Farming and industry structures and production
 - Animal health
 - Public health
 - Trade issues
 - Zoning and compartmentalisation
 - Animal movement patterns (including transhumance)

- Information management
 - Availability of resources
 - Social and cultural aspects.
- b. **Objectives.** Following the outcomes of this assessment, the objectives of animal identification system and animal traceability should be determined. These may include the improvement of:
- animal health (control of disease, disease surveillance, early disease detection and response, vaccination programmes)
 - public health (control of food safety incidents, disease surveillance, control of zoonotic diseases)
 - trade (reliable inspection and certification)
 - animal genetic
 - crisis/incident management.
- c. **Scope.** According to the chosen objectives, the scope has to define the targeted species/population within a country, zone, compartment or a particular programme.
- d. **Costs and benefits.** The costs and benefits need to be analytically assessed taking into account the objectives and the scope.
2. **Strategic plan.** Before implementing an animal identification and traceability system, a **strategic plan** should be developed in order to define/elaborate/determine the following elements:
- a. objectives and outcomes
 - b. scope
 - c. sustainability of the system
 - d. human and financial resources
 - e. logistics
 - f. means of identification and technology to be used
 - g. pilot projects
 - h. communication plan (including education)
 - i. timetable
 - j. responsibility and obligation of the different parties
 - i. competent authority

- ii. other relevant sector(s)/stakeholders
- iii. management and governance
- k. legal framework
- l. standards, manuals of procedures
- m. monitoring and evaluation.

Implementation

3. **Action plan:** The action plan must describe the roles, responsibilities and linkages between each stakeholder group and other public or private sector involved. The legal framework will establish these responsibilities.

The action plan must specify the timetable for implementation including the milestones and performance indicators, the human and financial resources needed to achieve these milestones and monitoring, enforcement and verification arrangements.

As part of the action plan, there needs to be a communication and a training plan.

Depending on the elements of the system, investment may be needed in a database or linked complementary databases, communication links between participants and the database/s, equipment and materials for identification, for a system using electronic technology readers and telecommunications, and standardised documents for participant use.

The Veterinary Administration is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the animal identification system, including verification of official identification materials and equipment to guarantee that these items comply with technical requirements and the supervision of their distribution. The Veterinary Administration is also responsible for ensuring that identifiers are unique and are used in accordance with the requirements of the animal identification system.

4. **Communication:** As part of the communication plan, the objectives, costs and benefits, responsibilities, correct identification and movement recording techniques and possible sanctions need to be communicated to industry participants and stakeholders. Communication strategies need to be targeted to the audience taking into account elements such as: the level of literacy (include technology literacy) and spoken languages. Training programmes should complement communication strategies, and focus on practical demonstrations where possible.
5. **Registration of establishments/owners:** Establishments where animals are kept should be identified and registered, including at least their physical location and species. If the registration of establishments is not applicable, the recording of the animal owner and the owner's place of residence is desirable.

Depending on the objectives and outcomes of the system, the types of establishments that may need to be registered include holdings, assembly centres, saleyards, abattoirs, knackeries, rendering plants, animal incinerators, agricultural fair grounds, transhumance, etc.

6. **Means of animal identification:** The means of physical animal identification must be chosen following consideration of elements such as: the costs, human resources, species, age of the animals to be identified, animal welfare, cultural aspects, technology compatibility and relevant standards, farming practices, animal population, climatic conditions, retention and readability of the identification method given the objectives of animal identification and animal traceability. Where group identification without a physical identification is adequate, documentation must be created specifying at least the number of animals in the group, the species, the date of identification, the owner and/or establishment and this documentation would constitute a unique group identifier. Where all animals in the group are physically identified with a group identifier, documentation must also specify the unique group identifier.

7. **Movement recording:** The registration of movements is necessary for animal traceability. When an animal leaves an establishment, this constitutes a movement and should be registered.

Movement records and associated documentation must specify, at least the species, the unique identifier or unique group identifier, the date of the movement, the establishment from which the animal or group of animals was dispatched, the destination establishment, and transit points in between. When establishments are not registered as part of the animal identification system, ownership and location changes constitute a movement record. Movement recording may also include registration of establishment of birth and slaughter or death, and means of transportation and the vehicle/transportation identifier.

8. **Information storage and recovery:** The methods used for collecting, compiling, storing and retrieving information as part of the animal identification system needs to be considered in the context of the objectives and outcomes of the system. The registration components of the animal identification system must be compatible and able to be linked to allow timely and reliable traceability and for other purposes. The animal identification system must minimise the duplication of information collection to reduce the burden, and to maximise the acceptance and the efficiency of the system. The duration of the storage of information should be compatible with the objectives and expected outcomes of the system.
9. **Database:** The databases should operate in order to meet the objectives of the system. The Competent Authority and Veterinary Administration must have unrestricted access to the databases as appropriate to meet the objectives of the system. The databases that are part of the animal identification system should be integrated with other complementary database such as those for epidemiology, laboratory, quality assurance programmes, certification, transportation, etc.
10. **Documentation:** Documentation, including electronic documentation, should be linked to animal identification as part of the animal identification system. Situations where documentation is needed must be specified and the information required and formats that are acceptable in each circumstance must be standardised.
11. laboratories (link with epidemiological information);
12. abattoir, rendering points, markets;
13. training;
14. awareness;
15. information on slaughter date, birth date, reproduction;

16. means of identifications (safeguarding lifetime animal identification: permanent, tamper proof).

Monitoring and verification

17. verification and auditing
18. sanctions
19. means of identifications (safeguarding lifetime animal identification: permanent, tamper proof)
20. timely notifications (minimum time for identification)
21. timely notification for movement
22. importation of animals.